

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2617

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2974

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IS, LE

SUBJECT: MILITARY SITUATION ALONG LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER

REF: STATE 113667 (NOTAL)

1. WE REVIEWED REMARKS OF LEBANESE OFFICIALS WITH MID EAST DIRECTOR VERED JUNE 2 AND SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO WASHINGTON AND EMBASSY BEIRUT TO HAVE ISRAELI COMMENTS AND ANY ISRAELI THOUGHTS ON HOW SITUATION MIGHT BEST BE STABILIZED. WE STRESSED US NOT INTERESTD IN PLAYING MIDDLE MAN ROLE AND THAT SORTING OUT OF ISSUES SHOULD BE IN ISRAELI-LEBANESE MILITARY TALKS.

2. MRS VERED (WE HAD TOLD HER BEFOREHAND LEBANESE BORDER SITUATION WOULD BE SUBJECT OF OUR CALL ON HER) MADE FOLLOWING CAREFUL PRESENTATION.

A. FEDAYEEN BASES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON REMAIN WHERE THEY
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WER, BOTH IN FATAHLAND AND ALSO IN COASTAL REGION. ONLY

EXCEPTION WAS SLIGHT MOVEMENT IN A FEW CASES AS RESULT OF IAF ATTACKS. LEBANESE ARMY KNEW EXACT LOCATIONS OF FEDAYEEN BASES, EVEN THOSE LOCATED INSIDE REFUGEE CAMPS TO WHICH LEBANESE ARMY ACCESS WAS LIMITED.

B. THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN POLICY OF FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS. THIS WAS PROVEN IN NIGHT OF JUNE 1-2, WHEN IDF PATROL KILLED TWO FEDAYEEN INFILTRATORS ON ISRAELI SIDE OF BORDER. POLICY WAS TO CAUSE AS MUCH DAMAGE AS POSSIBLE, AND TARGETS WERE HUMAN BEINGS. BOTH RADICAL AND NON-RADICAL WINGS OF FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT AGREED ON ONE THING: DESIRABILITY OF HEADING OFF EXTREME ISRAELI COUNTER-ACTION AND/OR EXTREME GOL COUNTER-ACTION WHICH COULD DISLODGE FEDAYEEN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND MAKE FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

C. LEBANESE ARMY WAS CURRENTLY PATROLLING BORDER AREA TO IMPEDE FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, ABILITY OF TWO INFILTRATORS TO CROSS INTO ISRAEL NIGHT OF JUNE 1-2 SHOWED EXTENT OF LEBANESE ARMY EFFICIENCY IN PATROLLING OPERATION.

3. MRS VERED SAID ABOVE WERE THE ISRAELI COMMENTS ON SITUATION. AS FOR ISRAELI THOUGHTS ON HOW BEST TO STABILIZE SITUATION, SHE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT OTHERS BEFORE REPLYING. (WE HAVE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT WITH HER JUNE 4.) BUT HER PERSONAL, INITIAL VIEW WAS THAT ONLY REAL SOLUTION WAS FOR LEBANESE ARMY TO DISLODGE FEDAYEEN PERMANENTLY FROM THEIR BASES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

4. LATER IN CONVERSATION MRS VERED SAID THAT BIG QUESTION WAS WHETHER SYRIA WOULD STIMULATE FEDAYEEN OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL VIA LEBANON. SHE SAID SHE ASSUMED SYRIANS WERE CONSISTENT ENOUGH NOT TO START, NOW THAT THEY HAD SIGNED DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, IMMEDIATELY VIOLATING IT BY SENDING FEDAYEEN ACROSS SYRIAN-ISRAELI DEMARCATION LINE. BUT TEMPTATION TO SEND FEDAYEEN THROUGH LEBANON WOULD BE STRONG.
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